

Testimony of

**Jennifer Roberts**

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Before the

Education Committee

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

Being a kindergarten teacher for nearly 20 years, I see first hand the importance of a starting age of 5 and smaller class size has on the first formal year of education. Students have been entering public education with increasing needs, both academically and emotionally, and with expectations and demands increasing, teachers have a very difficult time meeting the needs of these very young students. It is unrealistic to have the same expectations for a four year old as a five year old who is about to turn six when the skills students are learning in kindergarten are developmental in nature. That coupled with a class of 23-25 students creates a very challenging job for a teacher and a difficult first year experience for that young child.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

